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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/PPC, WHA/AND, AND G/TIP

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY MOTIVATES GOE TO MOVE FORWARD ON TIP

REF: SECSTATE 274736

1. (U) Summary: In a meeting on January 7, Minister of Government Jaime Damerval expressed his commitment to fighting trafficking in persons (TIP) to the Ambassador and DCM. He subsequently convoked the first meeting of the GOE's interinstitutional committee. He also re-assigned the portfolio to U/S Vicente Olmedo. Presidential advisor Carlos Polit also assured the DCM that TIP is one of President Gutierrez's top priorities. End Summary.

#### Ministry of Government Called TIP Meeting

2. (SBU) On January 7, in a wide-ranging conversation (reported septel) Minister Damerval praised TIP as one of his ministry's priorities. He was very enthusiastic but not well-versed on the topic. The Ambassador emphasized the need for Damerval to lead the government to take additional steps to fight against trafficking including promoting legal reforms and using them to prosecute traffickers. She provided him a copy of the interim Tier 2 watch list report, nothing that much more needed to be done. At her suggestion, Damerval agreed to convoke the GOE's interinstitutional committee. Damerval said he is a good friend of Omar Quintana, the new president of Congress, and that he would use his contacts to encourage Congress to pass TIP legislation.

3. (U) Following up on the Ambassador's meeting, on January 11 PolOff met with Undersecretary of Government Vicente Olmedo to whom Damerval assigned the trafficking portfolio. Olmedo was not very knowledgeable about TIP but said he was personally committed to fighting the problem. He confirmed the inter-institutional meeting scheduled for January 13, saying he would lead the GOE's committee with the assistance of the Director of Gender Affairs, Nelly Jacome. (Jacome is known favorably to us--she understands the TIP issue well.) Olmedo invited PolOff to attend the interinstitutional meeting and speak about the USG's TIP policy. PolOff accepted and encouraged Olmedo to coordinate on combating TIP with the Spanish and Peruvian embassies as well.

#### Presidency Re-commits to Fight Against TIP

4. (U) Carlos Polit, high-level advisor to the President, responded very positively to the DCM's call on January 3 explaining the interim assessment report and soliciting his assistance in making trafficking a key item on the GOE's agenda. Polit said President Gutierrez had told him on January 2 that the government should focus on combating TIP. Polit said he would consult with Damerval to move this issue forward.

#### MFA Falling Behind

5. (U) On January 4, PolOff met with Carmen Larrea, acting director of the Human Rights Office at the MFA, to present the GOE an advance copy of the interim watch list report, and explain what we hope to see from the GOE in coming months: i.e., legal reform, a national plan, and coordinated efforts to put traffickers behind bars. Larrea was slightly defensive but clearly understood the issue and the Embassy's interest in seeing additional progress.

#### Comment:

6. (U) The interim assessment report and the Ambassador's meeting with Damerval set off positive events: a planned meeting of the interinstitutional committee and assignment of the TIP portfolio at the working level. The GOE's leaders have been distracted with political stability issues for the past few months but appear to be getting back on track with TIP. We will attempt to take advantage of this momentum to encourage key steps, such as development of a national plan, progress on pending legislation, and prosecution of traffickers.

KENNEY